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AAIB SAYS TOO EARLY TO REACH ANY DEFINITIVE CONCLUSION ON CRASH

The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau said it was too early to draw any conclusion from its preliminary report into the AI 171 crash on June 12

COMES IN WAKE OF WSJ REPORT ON CRASH

AAIB's rejoinder came after The Wall Street Journal on Thursday, quoting people familiar with US officials' early assessment of evidence uncovered in the crash investigation, reported that "a black box recording of dialogue between the flight's two pilots indicates it was the captain who turned off switches that controlled fuel flowing to the plane's two engines"

NO ROOM FOR PREMATURE CONCLUSIONS

- Requesting all sections to refrain from drawing conclusions based on unfounded facts, AAIB said the investigation is still not complete and the final report will come out with root causes and recommendations
- After the release of its preliminary report on July 12, this is the first official comment from the AAIB amidst global concerns on the probe

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PEOPLE DIED IN THE AIR INDIA DREAMLINER CRASH IN AHMEDABAD

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

India pushback against NATO's sanctions threat

MEA calls out NATO's 'double standards', says country's energy security is top priority

JAYANTH JACOB AND RAKESH KUMAR @ New Delhi

No pressure, India has enough suppliers: Puri

Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said India will procure oil from other countries, should there be a problem sourcing it from Russia. "I don't feel any pressure in my mind. India has diversified the sources of supply," he said

INDIA on Thursday strongly pushed back against NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte's warning that countries continuing to trade with Russia could face 'very hard' secondary sanctions, cautioning against 'double standards' in global energy policies.

"We have seen reports on the subject and are closely following the developments," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in response to Rutte's comments.

"Let me reiterate that securing energy needs of our people is understandably an overriding priority for us. In this endeavor, we are guided by what is on offer in the markets, and by the prevailing global circumstances. We would particularly caution against any double standards on the matter," Jaiswal said.

The sharp response came after Rutte, during his visit to Washington on Wednesday, echoed US President Donald Trump's recent announcement of potential 100% tariffs on Russian exports, to be enforced in 50 days unless Moscow agrees to a deal on Ukraine.

Rutte directly named India, China, and Brazil, warning that continued business with Russia could "slam back" on them in a "massive way." "If you live in Beijing or Delhi... you might want to take a look into this, because this might hit you very hard," he said.

India is one of the largest importers of Russian crude oil, which is sold at a price cap of $60 per barrel, much below global market rates. As of July, Russian crude accounts for 40% of India's oil imports.

Meanwhile, Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Thursday said India is not concerned about sanctions on Russian crude, as there are enough supplies in the market.

Speaking at the Urja Varta 2025 event organised by the Directorate General of Hydrocarbons, Puri said, "I'm not worried at all. If something happens, we'll deal with it. India has diversified its sources of supply — we've gone from buying oil from about 27 countries to around 40 now."

Govt blames RCB, organisers for mess

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

File Photo

THE Karnataka government, in its status report submitted to the Karnataka High Court on the June 4 stampede near M Chinnaswamy Stadium that claimed 11 lives and left 33 injured, has blamed the Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB), its event management partner DNA Networks Pvt Ltd and Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) for the tragedy, during the team's victory celebrations.

The government also cited star RCB player and former India captain Virat Kohli's video uploaded by RCB on its social media pages for the overwhelming turnout that ultimately led to the fatal stampede.

The state had submitted its response to the HC in a sealed cover on June 12, and the court had recently asked it to furnish a copy to KSCA, RCB and DNA.

In the report, the government stated that RCB had posted several messages on its official social media handles, inviting the public to participate in the Victory Parade, despite no permission being granted for celebrations near the stadium. The report noted that RCB/DNA/KSCA had failed to seek appropriate police permission as per the prescribed format required under the Licensing and Controlling of Assemblies and Processions (Bangalore City) Order, 2009.

The report stated that around 6.30pm on June 3, before the IPL final commenced between RCB and Punjab Kings (PBKS) in Ahmedabad, KSCA had submitted a letter of intimation to the Cubbon Park police station, whose jurisdiction covers Chinnaswamy Stadium, said the report, citing the KSCA letter:

"Should RCB emerge victorious in the tournament, the management of RCB/DNA Entertainment Networks Pvt Ltd intended to plan potential victory parades around M Chinnaswamy Stadium, culminating in victory celebrations at the stadium." P5

CELEBRATION WAS UNILATERAL DECISION

The report stated: "The RCB management, in association with its event management partner, M/s DNA Networks Private Limited, and the KSCA, unilaterally decided to hold the victory celebration without prior consultation with the police and without obtaining the necessary permissions or license for such celebrations."

NIMISHA CASE

In touch with friendly nations for help: MEA

JAYANTH JACOB @ New Delhi

THE government is making urgent efforts to avert the execution of Nimisha Priya, sentenced to death in Yemen, to allow her family more time to reach a "mutually agreeable solution" with the victim's relatives, the Ministry of External Affairs said on Thursday.

Priya, a resident of Kerala, was convicted in the 2017 killing of a Yemeni man and is currently imprisoned in Sana'a, which is under Houthi rebel control. Her execution, initially scheduled for July 16, was postponed following interventions by Indian officials, members of the Indian diaspora in Yemen, and a cleric.

Nimisha Priya

"This is a very sensitive matter and the Government has been offering all possible assistance. We are in touch with local authorities and some friendly governments... as also family members to resolve this issue," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said. He did not name the countries.

DHARMASTHALA CASE

Whistleblower writes to CJI, pleads for safety

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Mangaluru

THE whistleblower in the alleged rape, murder and burial of several women in Dharmasthala has put the state police in the dock by writing to the Chief Justice of India, pleading for his safety and charging the cops with leaking the statement he gave to the investigation officer. The whistleblower has sought an immediate high-level investigation into the alleged leak of his statement.

The copies of the three-page letter were also addressed to the Chief Justice of the Karnataka High Court, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Home Minister Dr. G Parameshwara, and the DG & IGP.

The letter alleges that details provided by the complainant in a confidential police statement on July 14 are now available on YouTube. In the YouTube video, an individual claims that the information was provided to him by police personnel involved in the case.

The letter alleges that either the investigating officer or someone with access to the whistleblower's statement has leaked it. The letter says the leak has compromised the integrity of the investigation.

Despite the YouTube video being publicly available for over 11 hours, the police have, reportedly, taken no steps to investigate the internal breach. The police have also indicated the possibility of unilaterally withdrawing witness protection that was granted to the whistleblower.

"This contradictory conduct, leaking confidential information while threatening the very protections meant to encourage such disclosures, necessitates urgent action by both judicial and executive authorities," the letter urges the CJI.

The letter says the whistleblower had informed the Investigating Officer that he would not disclose the burial locations in advance due to fears of evidence tampering.

Despite this, the IO continued to pressure him for that information. The whistleblower, however, insisted that he would reveal the site only by physically taking the police there.

CABINET NOD FOR REGULARISATION OF B-KHATA PROPERTIES UNDER GBA

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

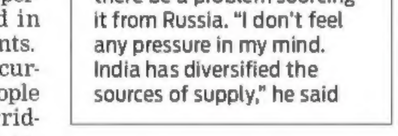
B Khata certificates will be issued for properties with some lacunae, but with some exemption

HK Patil, Law Minister

BRINGING much relief to harried property owners, the State Cabinet has given the go-ahead for regularisation of B-Khata properties that comes under Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) and that were issued before September 2024.

Law Minister HK Patil said the decision has been taken to bring discipline in controlling the illegal and uncontrolled building and layouts. He said a detailed order will be issued by the government on the parameters.

According to sources, owners of B-Khata properties will get certificates which they were deprived and this is expected to give some legal sanctity, where they can sell properties, avail loan from bank and even mortgage. CONTINUED ON P2



JUMBO FEAST

People feed elephants to mark the beginning of Malayalam month 'Karkidakam' at Sree Vadakkumnathan Temple, in Thrissur | PTI

EXPRESS READ

Faulty auto-translation distorting facts: CM

Bengaluru: Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday said faulty auto-translation of Kannada content on Meta's platforms is distorting facts and misleading users. "This is dangerous when it's official communications," he said | P4

EXPRESS INTAKE

Swachh rankings: BBMP comes in 36 among 40 cities | P2

SC questions K'taka HC's bail to Darshan | P3

Land grab: SC stays contempt proceedings against HDK | P4

WITH THIS ISSUE

CITY'S BEST WEEKEND GUIDE INDULGE

42 PAGES, INCLUDING 24 OF INDULGE (TABLOID)

Delhi HC junks FIRs, 70 get clean chit in Jamaat case

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

THE Delhi High Court on Thursday quashed 16 FIRs lodged against 70 people who were booked for sheltering foreign participants of a Tablighi Jamaat congregation in March 2020, during the early days of the Covid-19 pandemic. Justice Neena Bansal Krishna, in her verdict, simply said, "Chargesheets quashed," while disposing of the batch of petitions filed by the accused.

The 70 petitioners, represented by advocate Ashima Mandla, had approached the court seeking to end the criminal proceedings pending against them for allegedly hosting foreigners in violation of pandemic-related prohibitory orders.

The Delhi Police, which had earlier opposed the plea, argued that the accused sheltered foreign nationals who had attended the Markaz event at Nizamuddin, breaching lockdown orders and health protocols imposed by the Union government.

The petitioners maintained that there was no evidence linking them to the spread of Covid-19. They said their presence alongside foreigners inside mosques or homes could not be construed as participation in any religious congregation or violation of the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897.

"This is a classic case of exaggerated allegations unsupported by material proof," Mandla submitted, pointing out that the FIRs merely accused the petitioners of being present with foreign nationals. They were booked under various sections, including 188 (disobedience of public servant's order) and 269 (negligent act likely to spread infection) of the IPC.

The police had also cited multiple inspections between March 26–31, 2020, claiming to have found foreign nationals lodged in local mosques even after the nationwide lockdown was declared on March 24.

CITY INSTITUTIONS
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PCMCs
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Statistics, Economics, Business Studies and Accountancy
CEBA
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